

**§ 50-37. Enforcement authority of child support hearing officer; contempt.**

When a child support case is before a child support hearing officer for enforcement of a child support order, the hearing officer has the same authority that a district court judge would have, except in cases of contempt. Orders that commit a party to jail for civil or criminal contempt for the nonpayment of child support, or for otherwise failing to comply with a child support order, may be entered only by a district court judge. When it appears to a hearing officer that there is probable cause for finding such contempt in a case before the child support hearing officer and that no other enforcement remedy would be effective or sufficient, the hearing officer shall enter an order finding probable cause and referring the case for hearing before a district court judge. The order may indicate the amount of payment the responsible parent may make, or other action he may take, or both, to comply with the child support order. If proof of compliance is made to the hearing officer within a time specified in the order, the hearing officer may cancel the referral of the contempt case to district court. Except as specifically limited by this section, a clerk or magistrate acting as a child support hearing officer retains all of the contempt powers he or she otherwise has by virtue of being a clerk or magistrate. (1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 993, s. 1.)